

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009 AT 7:15 PM

RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1. **ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:15 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen P. Corbett, Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Jonathan Hecht, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., and Vice President Mark S. Sideris. Council President Younger was absent. Also present were the Town Manager, Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Joe Fair and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. It is noted that Vice President Sideris will Chair the meeting due to the absence of the Council President.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: January 27, 2009.** Councilor Devaney moved the minutes as amended, second by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.
4. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

The Chair opened up the hearing and recognized:

1. Fred Hewitt, Chair of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee – spoke in support of a proposed ordinance on the agenda tonight for a first reading and referral to committee which would require homeowners to clear their sidewalks of snow.

2. Russ Aricco, Fayette Street – commented on an article in the Watertown Tab dated January 23rd regarding a want/needs list for the town budget. He noted the big difference between the terms want and need. He also questioned the ultimate cost to homeowners regarding the proposed snow ordinance and the need for the committee to review procedures with respect to the town or its contractors plowing snow up onto the corners of the streets thereby blocking access and making it more difficult for homeowners of such property.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Committee of the Whole and Finance report – Vice President Mark

S. Sideris. Vice President Sideris read the Whole and Finance report regarding a February 4th meeting on State cuts to local aid and the Town's snow and ice deficit (attached). Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Corbett and adopted by voice vote.

B. Committee on Budget and Fiscal Oversight update on the 2010-2014

Capital Improvement Program – Mark S. Sideris, Chair. Councilor Sideris read the Budget and Fiscal Oversight report regarding Victory Field improvements as well as the Administration Building, Senior Center and Skating Rink maintenance projects. An additional meeting will be scheduled for February 23rd to discuss school capital needs, financial assessments and CIP recommendations. Councilor Falkoff moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

C. Committee on Personnel and Town Organization report and action on an

appointment to the Licensing Board – Stephen P. Corbett, Chair. Councilor Corbett stated that the Personnel Committee met earlier this evening to interview Mr. George Newman for reappointment to the Licensing Board. Following the interview, Councilor Corbett noted that the Committee unanimously voted 2-0 to recommend Mr. Newman's appointment to the Council. Councilor Falkoff moved to accept the verbal report, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Corbett moved to reappoint Mr. George Newman to a three year term to the Licensing Board expiring on February 15, 2012, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

D. Committee on Human Services report and action on an appointment to

the Board of Health – John J. Lawn, Jr., Chair. Councilor Lawn stated that the Human Services Committee met earlier this evening to interview Dr. Barbara Beck for reappointment to the Board of Health. Following the interview, Councilor Lawn stated that the Committee voted 3-0 to recommend Ms. Beck's reappointment to the full Council. Councilor Kounelis moved to accept the verbal report, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Lawn moved the reappointment of Dr. Barbara Beck for a three year term expiring on February 6, 2012, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

6. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION:

A. Informational Update on the Town's efforts in moving its health insurance

coverage to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC) effective July 1, 2009 – Thomas J. Tracy, Town Auditor. The Chair recognized the Manager who provided background information regarding the GIC. The Chair recognized Mr. Thomas Tracy, Town Auditor who reviewed correspondence and announcements send to town and school employees and retirees regarding the upcoming change from the town's insurance to the GIC program and the required documentation along with open enrollment and health fair dates. Mr. Tracy further noted that the Town Council must adopt Chapter 32, Section 18 in order for the Town to move forward with coverage. The Chair stated that the matter will be placed on the February 23rd agenda for a vote of the Council. Mr. Tracy thanked town employees Diane Ryan, Barbara Sheehan and Joseph Mahoney as well as school department employees Gaylene Fantasia and Jim Salvas for their assistance and continued efforts with the GIC program (see attached statement).

7. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A. First Reading and referral to Committee on a Proposed Ordinance

amending Chapter VII of the Town's Snow Ordinance – Susan G. Falkoff. The Chair recognized Councilor Falkoff who provided a first reading of the proposed snow ordinance (attached) Councilor Hecht moved to refer the matter to the Committee on Rules and Ordinances, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

8. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER:

A. Request for Confirmation of appointment to the Energy and Environment

Efficiency Committee. Referred to Public Works Committee.

9. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Kounelis read a letter from resident James Bennas regarding the recycling of hazardous waste materials (attached). Councilor Kounelis referred the matter to the Manager. The Manager indicated that he will bring the matter to the attention of Mr. Ward and Mr. Mee during their monthly Public Health and Public Works meeting.

Councilor Devaney requested information on when the town's trash pickup contract expires.

Councilor Falkoff asked for an update on the works of the ad hoc committee on curbs and sidewalk.

Councilor Kounelis requested a follow-up on a missing plaque at Fillipello Park.

The Chair read an email from the Council President (attached) requesting the issue of what can constitute a subcommittee referral and what is deemed administrative in nature to be referred to subcommittee for a recommendation. Councilor Hecht moved the matter to Rules and Ordinances, seconded by Councilor Lawn.

Councilor Corbett stated that the subject matter was not as broad of an issue as the email indicates.

Councilor Kounelis clarified the matter by stating that at the last meeting a union representative wanted to come before a subcommittee; but that town employees report to their department head who then report to the Manager.

Councilor Devaney stated that in her opinion, this was an embarrassment after twenty eight years in this government not to know the purpose of subcommittees, after hundreds of subcommittees have been

held to need a committee to make a recommendation. She stated that employees have the right to go to subcommittees even as the only way to have open communication with the council. She advised that it was past practice citing how crossing guards called her and requested to go before a subcommittee and she brought the matter to the council and it was referred to subcommittee.

The referral to review and come back with a recommendation regarding the subject matter was adopted by voice vote.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS – none noted.

11. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Russ Arrico, Fayette Street – asked that wood and tires be added to the town’s list for recyclables.

Pat Gold – Duff Street – asked that she be notified of the date regarding the subcommittee discussion on the proposed snow ordinance.

Burt Greenberg, Duff Street – stated that the timeframe of the clearing of the snow from sidewalks by homeowners is too difficult after a snow storm. He noted that he lives in a condominium complex with 308 units, making for a more complex issue with the many sidewalks involved.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Lawn moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm and go into executive session in order to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.